Marvel Super Heroes Set from Royal Mail

On March 14 British Royal Mail released a Marvel Super Hero set of stamps collectible products. The 15-stamp set features some of the most popular Super Heroes from the comic books.

Ten stamps show Spider-Man; Hulk; Thor; Iron Man; Doctor Strange; Captain Marvel; Peggy Carter; Black Panther; Captain Britain and Union Jack. A further five stamps are part of an exclusive short comic strip story contained in a miniature sheet. Royal Mail provided background information on each of the characters in the set:

Doctor Strange - Once a brilliant yet vain neuro-surgeon, Stephen Strange sought out the help of the Ancient One when his hands were badly damaged in a car crash. Strange's path led him to become a Master of the Mystic Arts and Earth's Sorcerer Supreme, protecting the world from evil forces.

Thor - The mighty Thor is the Norse God of Thunder. Once cast out of Asgard for his pride, he was trapped on Earth as the injured doctor, Donald Blake. Thor's banishment is long ended and now he protects both Earth and Asgard as an Avenger.

Captain Marvel - Carol Danvers was an Air Force officer when she met Kree hero Captain Mar-vell. After her DNA mixed with his during an explosion, she gained super powers and took the name Ms Marvel. Following the original's death, Carol took on the mantle of Captain Marvel to honor his legacy.

Spider-Man - Peter Parker is Spider-Man, New York's amazing web-slinging hero. Bitten by a radioactive spider as a teenager, Peter Parker gained arachnid-like abilities and, after his Uncle Ben was murdered, swore to use his abilities to help others—having realized that with great power comes great responsibility.

Black Panther - T'Challa is the Black Panther, ruler of the technologically advanced African nation of Wakanda and protector of its valuable vibranium supply. T'Challa first travelled to America to learn more about the country's heroes and soon became a leading member of the Avengers.

Hulk - When mild-mannered scientist Bruce Banner was bombarded by radiation from a gamma bomb, he was transformed into the Incredible Hulk. The green-skinned behemoth is one of the planet's most powerful and misunderstood heroes – feared by a world he has saved numerous times.

Peggy Carter - Peggy Carter was working for the French Resistance in the Second World War when she met and fell in love with Captain America. The two fought the Axis powers together before they were separated by the war. Peggy went on to become a leading agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. (Strategic Homeland Intervention, Enforcement and Logistics Division).

Union Jack - The original Union Jack was Lord James Falsworth, who fought in the First World War. When his descendant refused to take on the role, the mantle was passed to Joey Chapman, a working class hero from Manchester, who has gone on to fight alongside the Knights of Pendragon and the Invaders.

Captain Britain - Brian Braddock was chosen by Merlyn to be Britain's greatest protector. Granted amazing powers, Brian became Captain Britain. He soon learned he was part of a multi-dimensional Captain Britain Corps and has fought alongside Excalibur and the Avengers to keep his country—and the world—safe from harm.

Iron Man - When terrorists captured billionaire inventor Tony Stark, they forced him to create weapons. With shrapnel near Stark's heart endangering his life, Stark tricked the terrorists, building a suit of powered armor to defeat them. It was the birth of the armored Avenger – the invincible Iron Man.

A specially-created story, illustrated by Alan Davis, who designed the new Special Stamps, and has worked with Marvel since the early 1980s and first illustrated Captain Britain in 1985 features five further stamps printed in a miniature sheet (photos, page 9 and in color on our front cover). The story, entitled Avengers UK, sees Captain Britain rallying Super Heroes to face the arch villain Thanos.

Marvel is one of the world's most prominent character-based entertainment companies with a catalogue of iconic Super Hero characters and marks its 80th anniversary in 2019

The world-famous Marvel Comics grew out of Timely Comics, which in 1939 published its first comic book, Marvel Comics

#1. Editor Stan Lee and artist Jack Kirby created a Super Hero revolution when they devised a new world of characters in the early 1960s, including Hulk and Thor.

In 1963, Lee and Steve Ditko hit upon a new idea for a hero; a teenager who accidentally takes on Super Hero abilities. They tested it out in a magazine that was about to be retired. However, the character caught the attention of the readers and Spider-Man was born.

In 1972, Marvel UK was formed, publishing weekly comics that repackaged the stories for a British audience. This changed in 1976 when *Captain Britain Weekly* was launched, featuring the adventures of the first Marvel Super Hero created for the UK. The first Marvel Super Hero created for the UK was Captain Britain, followed by Super Hero Union Jack, who also made his first appearance in 1976, in the classic Marvel series, Invaders.

The 1980s, in particular, saw U.S. comic publishers heavily recruiting British writers and illustrators, who increasingly worked on the American publications and began to inject darker storylines to widen the appeal of the characters. One such artist is stamp illustrator, artist, Alan Davis, who said: "I really can't take all the credit for producing these stamps. The speed of production required in U.S. comics makes it necessary to separate the creative disciplines into four individual jobs, writer, penciller, inker and colorist. My primary focus is writing and pencilling. My long-time collaborator Mark Farmer supplied the blackline inks for the stamps and Laura Martin added the color."

Philip Parker, Royal Mail, said: "Generations have grown up, spellbound by the adventures and the personalities of these Super Heroes. Our epic new stamps celebrate each in characteristic pose, emerging from the stamp frame."

The Walt Disney Company purchased Marvel Studios in 2009. Marvel Studios' *Captain Marvel* is currently in movie theaters across the U.S. and around the world.

From the moment the incredible Hulk, the amazing Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four burst from the cover of *The Mighty World of Marvel* #1 in 1972, Marvel's heroes have been at the forefront of UK comics.
With legendary creators such as Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and the UK's very own Alan Davis leading the charge, Marvel's stories have thrilled generations of fans. As new readers have fallen under the Marvel spell, so too have successive generations of writers and artists taken on the mantle of weaving new heroes and villains into the ever-expanding Marvel Multiverse. Here we showcase ten of Marvel's greatest Super Heroes and their most nefarious villains.
HEROES

MARVEL
Royal Mail
VILLAINS
GREATEST BATTLES
Marvel has a long history of epic confrontations, but it was with *Marvel Super Heroes Secret Wars* that the company started to take crossovers to a whole new level.
MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS
SECRET INVASION
SIEGE

The Marvel stamps also are available in a Presentation Pack that includes additional information. Shown at left, the Pack inner cover includes pencil sketches by Alan Davis, leading up to the final designs.